Fall in job vacancies largest on record

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Source: Job Vacancies, Australia, May 2020

The number of job vacancies in Australia decreased by 43 per cent over the May 2020 quarter, the largest fall on record, according to new seasonally adjusted figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Bjorn Jarvis, head of labour statistics at the ABS, said: “this was the largest quarterly fall in job vacancies over the 40 years of the survey, and well above the previous largest fall of 27 per cent, during the 1990s recession back in November 1990.”

Job vacancies in the private sector fell by 45 per cent, and by 29 per cent in the public sector.

In original series terms, falls in vacancies were seen in all states and territories. The largest fall was in Victoria, which decreased by more than half (52 per cent).

Three of the industries most heavily impacted by recent job losses also showed the largest declines in job vacancies.

“Vacancies in the Arts and recreation services industry fell 95 per cent, followed by Rental, hiring and real estate (down 68 per cent), and Accommodation and food services (down 66 per cent),” Mr Jarvis said.

Additional ABS analysis showed that 93 per cent of businesses reported no vacancies at all in May 2020, up from 88 per cent in the previous May. This was particularly high in the Arts and recreation services industry (close to 100 per cent), and the Accommodation and food services industry (98 per cent).

"The ABS understands that this has been a difficult time for businesses in Australia and would like to thank the community for their continued support in responding to ABS surveys, given how critically important this information is," said Mr Jarvis.

Media notes

- “Recent job losses” refers to changes in payroll jobs in Weekly Payroll Jobs and Wages in Australia (cat. no. 6160.0.55.001), since the 100th confirmed case of COVID-19 in Australia, in mid-March.
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